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GOD'S WAY IN THE DEEP.

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DR. VAN RENSSELAER'S DISCOURSE,

ON THE

LOSS OF THE ARCTIC.

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C. SHERMAN, PRINTER.

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GOD'S WAY IN THE DEEP.

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A DISCOURSE

ON THE OCCASION OF

# THE WRECK OF THE ARCTIC.

DELIVERED IN

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BURLINGTON, N. J.,

OCTOBER 15, 1854.

BY

CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER, D.D.,

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

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Having been invited by the Elders of the Presbyterian Church in Burlington, N. J., to fill the pulpit on the last Sabbath, in the absence of the pastor-elect, the subject of my Discourse was selected by the providence of God. I felt the more at liberty to pursue the train of thought adopted, on account of my previous relations to the Church as its pastor.

At the request of the Elders, the Discourse is furnished for publication, with the earnest hope that this attempt to draw lessons of wisdom from the great ocean-disaster may receive the Divine blessing.

C. V. R.

Philadelphia, Oct. 16th, 1854.

## DISCOURSE.

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“Thy way is in the deep, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.”—PSALM 77 : 19.

GOD’S providence is over earth, firmament, and sea. He hath “established the ordinances of Heaven, and set the dominion thereof in the earth.” (Job 38 : 33.) He “binds the influences of Pleiades, and looses the bands of Orion” (Job 38 : 31), and “causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth.” (Psalm 135 : 7.) “The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land.” (Psalm 95 : 5.)

The events of providence, like the works of nature, are full of grandeur and solemnity,—frequently of wonder and terror. Some providences stand out like mountain peaks, capped with the awe of inaccessible and mysterious heights; others, like the volcano, flame with destruction: or like the whirlpool of the sea, foam with ruin. In times of calamity, our confidence in God must not be shaken. “The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his thoughts.” (Psalm 115 : 17.) “What! shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and not receive evil?” (Job 2 : 10.) Instead of murmuring at providential dispen-

sations, let us endeavour to receive with docility and faith, the lessons of wisdom concealed in their infliction. "Thy way is in the deep, and thy path in the great waters ; and thy footsteps are not known."

I. God's ways in the deep are ways of POWER, and his paths are the paths of MIGHT.

The omnipotence of God gave being to the ocean. The first impress of divine agency was made upon the void globe by the Spirit of God moving "upon the face of the waters." (Gen. 1 : 2.) "The gathering together of the waters called he seas" (Gen. 1 : 10), and with his omnipotent hand "he shut up the sea with doors" (Job 38 : 8), and closed them with the bars of an impassable decree. (Prov. 8 : 29.)

The ocean is one of creation's emblems of power. Its restless waves motion to human view Jehovah's might. "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice ; the Lord is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." (Psalm 93 : 4.) Every mariner that launches his adventurous vessel upon the ocean, feels that "with God is terrible majesty." (Job 37 : 22.) The towering cliffs of water,—their perilous, yawning depths,—the unappeased and threatening roar,—the all-pervading, splashing foam,—the tumultuous shock of waves ;—all impress upon the mind the solemnities of the presence of an almighty Agent. Even upon the beach, every wave that dashes to the

spectator's feet, and recedes into the aggressive surges, to be propelled back again in ceaseless flow, leads to thoughts of sublimity and might.

The ways of God upon the sea are powerful ways. The wreck of a world was once strewn upon the deep. The deluge which overswept the mountain tops, hurled the human race, save eight, into the abyss of destruction. Although the bow of promise is the heavenly sign against the recurrence of a universal catastrophe, yet the annual history of the world has always been marked with records of ocean devastations. From the time when Pharaoh and his chariots were overthrown, the horse and his rider,—when “the floods stood upright as a heap” (Ex. 15 : 8), throughout all generations, God has wrought wonders on the deep. The destruction of the Invincible Armada, the loss of minor fleets and vessels innumerable, the wreck of the *Albion*, of the *President*, of the *Glasgow*, the last awful engulfing of the *Arctic*, are so many illustrations of sea-power,—varying in magnitude, but one in destruction.

Behold yonder ill-fated vessel, now the latest of the lost, speeding her magic way from the cliffs of Albion across the wide Atlantic. Her swiftness is the triumph of human art. Like a moving tower of strength, she seems to command the waters to fulfil her will. In seven days the space between continent and continent has been traversed; and at noon on the 27th of September, her massive timbers are as strong as when

hewn from the mountain forest. Suddenly, a vital and tremendous blow, which the angry waves hasten to render incurable, pierces the pride of her strength. Her capacious chambers become the prey of the invading deep. Human skill is baffled. Destruction draws near with a certainty that may be measured. The vessel slowly settles in the surrounding element; deeper and deeper the huge fabric sinks from view; terror reigns among the living masses that crowd her decks in despair; and finally the noble Arctic, with shrieks seldom heard since the days of the deluge, goes down a wreck into the ocean's depths. Mournful and awful, but not unordered, was her doom. God's dominion was there. "Thy way is in the deep, and thy path in the great waters; and thy footsteps are not known." "Lo, these are parts of his ways; but the thunder of his power, who can understand?" (Job 26 : 14.)

The memorials of the ocean's devastation are scattered throughout all the hills and plains of its unfathomed abyss. In that great submerged cemetery, power is seen in the mingled wreck of timber and treasure and human bones.

Great as are the ravages of the ocean, true religion recognizes them to be the exhibition of that might, which gave to every agency of nature its appointed resources. "The most high God, as possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14 : 22), rules over all. The elements are his, which "go and say unto him, Here we



are." (Job 38 : 35.) "The Lord, thy God, is among you, a mighty God and terrible." (Deut. 7 : 21.) Every event testifies of his presence. He was at the wreck of the Arctic—God, in the manifestation of power.

II. God's ways upon the sea are ways of SOVEREIGNTY, and his steps are those of a KING.

"The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King forever." (Psalm 29 : 10.) "Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again; he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up; also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth." (Job 12 : 14, 15.) His sovereign dominion utters forth, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." (Job 38 : 11.)

God's sovereignty in the recent disaster is seen 1st, *In the destruction of that particular vessel.* Of all the steamers of the line, how came it to pass that the Arctic was made the victim of collision? The Pacific, the Baltic, the Atlantic, yet walk in triumph on the waves; but their sister, of kindred health and beauty, sleeps in death. Why was one taken, and the others left? Again, why was the Arctic, rather than the Vesta, destroyed? All sense of danger on the part of the larger vessel was lost at first, in efforts to aid the other, that proved the least injured. Who arranged the

angle at which the blow was given, filled the sails with wind that it might come the stronger, broke off the stem so as to prevent the stopping of the leak, and ordered the damage out of reach, below the water mark, amidst the boxes in the hold? To human view, the chances, even now, seem to have been greatly in favour of the Arctic. Whatever may have been the advantages in the Vesta's construction, under whose providence was it that this construction was secured to the one and not to the other? A great Bible truth is evolved in the Arctic's terrific loss—GOD REIGNS AS SOVEREIGN.

The same truth appears in her destruction *during that particular voyage*. The noble steamer had made many safe passages, through the fogs of the great banks, and had never before come in contact with destruction. For four years, subject at intervals to the same species of danger, she had never encountered it. Who can declare the reason, unless it be among the sovereign secrets of the God of the seas?

The *circumstances* of the Arctic's destruction, indicate the sovereignty of an overruling providence. It was among the clear contingencies of the disaster, that many of the passengers might have been saved. But, although the aspect of things seemed to justify the course taken by the faithful and devoted commander, the result proved that everything went wrong. If the vessel had been stopped, she would have been in immediate proximity to the Vesta, and all might have

been rescued. But the very effort to reach the shore, probably forced the water with more rapidity into her injured sides, and prevented an immediate resort to rafts and boats. The refusal to take up the boat containing the officer, who had the chief influence over the crew, was another of the unforeseen calamities, which ordinary circumstances would not have compassed. A few more hours would have been sufficient to reach the shore, if the vast wheels had been supplied with power to continue their eager revolutions. But the vessel was doomed. The peculiar incidents of the fearful scene can never be explained without the admission of God's sovereignty in the affairs of life.

*In the persons saved and lost*, there was providential sovereignty. Out of four hundred souls, probably not one hundred survive.\* Why were no more rescued on a calm day, not far from shore, in the track of commerce, and with four hours' warning of the danger? Why were legal eminence, literary accomplishment, commercial reputation, and general respectability, lost to society, whilst perhaps, ignorance and insignificance were saved? Why were female loveliness, maternal influence, and blooming youth,—why were rank and riches—why was religion—less secure than hardihood,

\* The loss in the Arctic, although fearful, was not so great in proportion, as in the steamship "Home," which was stranded in 1837, when only twenty, out of about one hundred and forty passengers, were saved. In the steamboat "Lexington," burned, in 1840, in Long Island Sound, only four, out of one hundred and ten, were rescued.

selfishness, and less responsible relationship to society? "It is appointed unto all men once to die." (Heb. 12 : 7), and a sovereign God arranges the circumstances of the life and death of every individual. "He doeth his will among the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say to him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4 : 35.) "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men." (Psalm 90 : 3.) He, "in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways" (Dan. 5 : 23), "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph. 1 : 11.) "Hail and *vapour* fulfil his word." (Psalm 148 : 18.) He is king on the ocean, a sovereign over the winds and the waves, over man, and "whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea." (Psalm 8 : 8.)

"Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46 : 10), is one of the impressive lessons which our public calamity unfolds.

III. God's ways in the deep are ways of WISDOM, and his steps full of KNOWLEDGE.

Before proceeding to the application of this proposition to the providence engaging our attention, a few general remarks may be offered in explanation.

First. There is some good purpose in *all* God's providences. "The Lord of hosts is wonderful in counsel." (Isa. 29 : 29.) "He is mighty in wisdom." (Job 36 : 5.) The ocean itself, as a work of God, and

an arrangement of nature, has adaptations of immense value. Its connection with bays, rivers, streams, springs, makes it the available centre of a grand system of terrestrial circulation, essential to the world's physical condition, whilst its facilities for international communication answer the highest commercial, political, social, and religious ends. Not less wise are the events which occur on the surface of the ocean. Like all other providences, they display Divine wisdom. Are the hairs of our heads numbered? So is the strength of every plank, the power of every wave, the incidents and influence of every event, which has the sea as its scene. Wisdom glazes itself on the quiet surface, and caps every surge of the storm.

Secondly. The wisdom of Divine providence is often beyond the reach of human vision. "Canst thou by searching find out God, or know the Almighty to perfection?" (Job 11 : 7.) "His ways are not as our ways, or his thoughts as our thoughts." (Psalm 103.) An old writer says, "We are too short-sighted to apprehend and judge of God's works; man cannot understand his own way, much less the ways of an infinite God. His judgments are a great deep. We may sooner fathom the deepest part of the sea, understand all the turnings of those subterranean passages, lave out the ocean with a spoon, or suck in that great mass of waters, than understand the ways of God, with our shallow minds." "Thy way is in the deep, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not

known" (Psalm 77 : 19). The mystery of providence is often the highest perfection of its wisdom.

Thirdly. The purposes of events, if unexplained at the time of their occurrence, are often subsequently unfolded, either in this life, or in the life to come. God often permits us to see at a future time what we do not now understand. We are learners here below; and the true and earnest disciple of Christ is not often left in utter darkness about providential dispensations. They are apt to be discovered by degrees, as the mist is lifted up from the beauty of the valley. And even, if in this life, things, expedient for us to know, are concealed from our eyes, there is another world for the believer's advancement in knowledge. The principle which our beloved Lord made known, is full of encouragement and hope amidst the perplexing adversities of this world: "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." (John 13 : 7.)

With these admissions and explanations of providence in general, let us endeavour to obtain lessons of wisdom from that providence in particular, which absorbs the public mind.

1. Relatives and friends, who mourn the precious dead, are pointed to God for consolation. This affliction falls heavily upon honoured, as well as unknown households, whom Christian sympathy would love to relieve. Many a family has been smitten with fear and mourning; many a heart wrung with bitter anguish; many a lamentation ascended for those, whose



faces will never be seen more in the flesh. God comfort his stricken ones! The weary and the heavy-laden can go for rest to One who is "afflicted in all the afflictions of his people." (Isa. 63 : 9.) A high aim of this dispensation would be fulfilled by the renewed consecration and holiness of those who feel its weight. These natural sorrows, if made instrumental in awakening, or rekindling, spiritual life, would bring "glory to God in the highest." An old writer remarks, "He that knows not the use of the grape, would foolishly censure a man who should fling them into a wine-press, and squeeze them all up; nevertheless only in that way the wine comes. So God treads *his* grapes in a wine-press to get *delicate wine*." Sorrow is an active agency in the divine government to secure the sanctification of saints. The refinement of their graces is through the manifold trials of this present life.

"There is strength  
Deep bedded in our hearts, of which we reck  
But little, till the shafts of Heaven have pierced  
Its fragile dwelling. Must not earth be *rent*  
Before *her gems are found*?"

Sorrow and mourning are entirely consistent with resignation. "Jesus wept." (John 11 : 35.) But immoderate grief may tempt to murmurings and complaint. Not realizing the results of chastisement, or understanding the meaning of the dispensation, an un-

humbled heart might naturally, but unreasonably, find fault with God, as too severe. In the language of the writer already quoted, "We judge not the husbandman angry with the ground for tearing it with his plough; nor censure an artificer for hewing his stones or beating his iron; but wait patiently the end of his design. Why should we not pay the same respect to God, since we are less capable of judging of his incomprehensible wisdom, than of the skill of our fellow-creatures?" May this severe trial find its sufferers drawn nearer to God, and thus their severe losses will have compensations of glory.

2. The recent wreck may be overruled, in the wisdom of God, to the good of survivors. Never have men been delivered from more imminent peril, or been exposed to more frightful and agonizing scenes. The sights and the sounds of the sinking Arctic must have swept undying memories into the minds of surviving shipmates. No doubt, impressions of eternity, never before realized, loomed into view. Disasters at sea have been known to be blessed of God in working conviction of sin and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps the scenes of the recent calamity will be used in saving immortal souls. It is not "hoping against hope" to believe that some heavy-laden sinners will be thus rescued from a more awful abyss than the Atlantic's depths.

3. Some of God's people in the Arctic may have been taken away at that time, in order to be delivered



from future sorrows and troubles. It makes little difference when death comes, after all, provided we are prepared for it. The future is all unknown; but it is certain that surviving friends will have to breast severe billows in the remaining storms of life. To be taken away from the evil to come, is a privileged providential allotment. They who have entered the desired haven of a better land, and have escaped the turmoils and unknown contingencies of this present world, have already received the congratulations of saints and angels. It is surely better to be there than here.

4. Was it not wise to demonstrate the terrors of the deep, at a period when steam navigation is about to be carried on upon a larger and larger scale? Many lives may be eventually saved—alas, at a great cost!—by this disaster. Experience inculcates improvement.

Improvement in *construction* is rendered necessary. The compartments of the *Vesta* were the means of her deliverance,—and why should not all ocean steamers have compartments? If more difficult to be made in wooden vessels, then let iron be the material of construction, or let the additional expenditure in wood be incurred. The necessary arrangements of safety are to be inwrought into our commercial architecture *at any cost*. The money lost in the Arctic would have paid for compartments in the Collins line for a century to come. Now that the utility of this new arrangement has been so clearly exhibited, it

ought to be incorporated among the practical axioms of ship-building.

Improvement in *providing life-boats* is imperatively demanded. Their number ought to be sufficient for a full complement of passengers. Do they take up too much room? How could space be better appropriated? It is awful to think that the means of escape were not at hand, and that much precious life was sacrificed on account of this material insufficiency. The Arctic's experience is a warning which cannot pass unheeded.

Improvement in *discipline* is emphatically inculcated by the late fearful disaster. One of the most melancholy incidents of the wreck is the seizure of the boats by the crew, and the escape of mates, engineers, firemen, sailors, porters, waiters, and other inferior hands, at the expense of women and children. Much indeed is to be yielded to the impulse of self-preservation; but how much was due, that was not done, to the claims of philanthropy, the requirements of discipline, and the generous dictates of heroic self-devotion? Discipline in an ocean steamer, and such discipline as will bear the test of emergency, is as assiduously to be cultivated as the compass is to be followed. It has been generally imagined that the American steamers are deficient in this particular, although superior to all others in general arrangements for the comfort of passengers. But who would not prefer safety to comfort? Who would risk his

life with a crew so pusillanimous as to *rush for the boats*, when their aid was necessary to save helpless men, women, and children? No military achievement ever reflected such undying fame on British soldiers as their conduct at the wreck of the Birkenhead, when every woman and child was saved, and a whole regiment stood steady in the ranks as the ship went down with all on board. American commercial discipline, if necessarily inferior to the military discipline of Great Britain, must exhibit sterner stuff than at the wreck of the Arctic, in order to secure public confidence.

Improvement *in navigation* amidst fogs and dangers, is another of the imperative lessons to be henceforth learnt by heart. Thirteen miles an hour, through an envelope of cloud rendering near objects invisible, is a recklessness all the harder, because constantly practised. So far as the accounts have been published, there is no intimation that a bell was struck, a steam-whistle sounded, or a gun fired.

If the improvements, obviously suggested by this terrible disaster, be adopted—improvements of construction, of the means of escape, of discipline, and of the mode of navigation—there may be eventually a great saving of life by the loss of the Arctic's three hundred passengers. God may thus bring good out of evil, and overrule minor calamities for the general weal of states and nations.

5. Another wise aim of God may have been to

awaken sympathy in behalf of those, whose home is upon the deep.

The loss of the Arctic is but one of the many shipwrecks of the year. The seaman braves numerous dangers and trials, endures much suffering, and is exposed to severe temptations peculiar to his particular mode of life. He has claims upon the benevolence of the whole community, which are wafted upon every gale. Every shipwreck is a plea from God to remember the sailor. Not only the sailor's interests, but our interests, are depending upon his intellectual and moral elevation. The conduct of the Arctic's crew is only an additional argument to seek out a higher order of men, and to attend to the good of their souls. Character has much to do with discipline on shipboard. Improve your seamen, and you gain for commerce, for human life, and for religion. The American Seaman's Friend Society is an important national institution. All its plans and efforts commend themselves to favour and co-operation. Those who "go down to the sea in ships" are an important and influential class; and, although the reproach has been wiped away that "no one cared for their souls," yet much is to be done for the general amelioration of their condition.

6. God has given to the whole community new instructions in regard to the uncertainty of earthly plans and calculations.

The great mass of the passengers were approaching

their homes, and about to re-enter upon the pursuits of business and the gentler duties of life. How suddenly came the change, like a mysterious reverie of noon, converted into dread, terrific fact! The merchant was there, with his invoice made void at the custom-house of the tomb. The jeweller, with his large collections, found himself stripped of all that he had for an unclothing for eternity. One of the rich was heard to exclaim to one of the boats, "I will give £30,000, if you will take me in;" but the sea took him in for a peculiar prey. A loving heart cried out, "Remember me to my wife;" a precious but unavailing token of remembrance to her, whose sorrows swell with tides of tears. Husbands and wives were there, dying in each other's consecrated embrace; and the innocence of childhood prattled, or wept, or clung to dear mamma, to the last. Professional eminence at the bar and in the seats of literature, bade farewell to forum and to Alma Mater, amidst the distractions of a lost and listless multitude. Family groups, loved and loving, around whom many hopes had clustered, like favourite blossoms on a spreading vine, were about to be shaken apart, only to be gathered up into a cast-out heap of ruin. Travellers, who had seen Alps and Rhine, and Pyramids, and ancient monuments of Greece and Rome, and modern visions of France and England, suddenly reached the end of all things visible. Widows, and lonely wives, thought of home; and in the bitterness of the present, wavered between the past and the future.

The brave commander was there, who declared and acted that "the fate of the ship should be his fate;"\* and the noble Collins youth, who refused to take a life-preserver whilst the gentler sex were in want of them. The veteran publisher surrendered the labour of years with cheerful acquiescence, and sunk down from the business of an earthly firm to the inheritance that fadeth not away. Men of leisure were suddenly to be transferred into that world where there is no idleness. The daughter of fashion was there, rich in the gifts of beauty and grace; but how little was her body cared for in that saloon of despair! The time had come for them all to die. Happier they who had already gone, by that unlooked-for precipitation into the sea! Hark, that cry of terror, bursting with unanimous, piercing agony, from hundreds of human tongues! It is the death-sound of the Arctic's company, passing through the gates of the tomb. Men, women, and children; old age, middle life, and youth; the rich and poor; all vanished in the tumult of a swift procession, that trampled upon earthly hopes, and crowded human distinctions to the very depths of the sea. Can such scenes occur without a solemn remembrance of the uncertainty of all the plans we are forming and of the business we are pursuing? Oh, money-idolaters, "wherefore do ye spend<sup>d</sup> your labour for that which satisfieth not?" (Isa. 55: 2.) Parents, can there be a

\* Captain Luce went down with his ship, but was finally rescued in a wonderful manner.



higher aim than to "bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" (Eph. 6:4.) Young men and maidens, will the wine-cup and the waltz fit you to go through scenes like these, or to die in peace at your own quiet and undisturbed homes? Oh, let the providence of God, which preaches to us all from wreck and death and grave, be heeded in due time; so that, putting on fear and loving prayer, we may imbibe by divine grace the spirit, and practise the duties, of pure and undefiled religion.

7. God in his wisdom proclaims, through the exceptions of disaster, the general goodness of his providence.

The calamities of this life are no impeachment of the goodness of God. The destruction of a whole world brought no suspicion upon the divine attributes; nor can any dispensation of providence cast a shadow upon the glory that shines out of heaven. Whilst God's goodness is untarnished by each and all the instances of shipwreck and marine calamity of every kind, his providence is exalted in the *general* preservation of those, who "do business upon the great waters." (Psalm 107:23.) How seldom *comparatively* do shipwrecks occur! Thousands of voyages, and tens of thousands, are made by the ships of the world; but disaster is the exception, not the rule, of ocean navigation. When we consider the frequency and the power of storms upon the sea, the dangers of lightning, of fire, of fog, of rock, of night, of ice, and then take ac-

count of the frailty of the very strongest workmanship of man, we are compelled, in view of the general safety of vessels and navigators, to acknowledge the great goodness and mercy of him "who treadeth upon the waves of the sea." (Job 9 : 8.) "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." (Psalm 107 : 23.)

8. Every providential affliction, like the present, reminds us that the sorrows and calamities of this life are the result of sin.

"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5 : 7), because, "we are by nature the children of wrath." (Eph. 3 : 2.) The sin of Eden was followed by the doom of suffering; and God's providential dealings are administered upon the principle that we have fallen from the original inheritance of righteousness. A moral government, by the very conditions of its existence, exacts penalty for the violation of precept.

Hence our mortal destiny is mingled with retribution. When pestilence, or famine, or earthquake, or fire, or war, or shipwreck, or calamity in any form, whether of private or public visitation, is sent forth, the proximate, or remote cause, is *sin*. Suffering has never invaded the habitations of holiness. Unfallen men would never have been subjected to the woes of the Arctic's scenes. Far be it from the writer to affirm that the unfortunate sufferers were obnoxious to any special punishment for special sins. Our Lord rebukes



such an interpretation of his providences by a reference to the men, "upon whom the tower of Siloam fell," and to the Galileans "whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." (Luke 13:1.) No special retribution was incurred by any of these classes; for the same might justly have been meted out to others. The great principle is that sin and suffering go together. Whatever may be the character and duration of our chastisements, God is vindicated in their infliction. They were deserved; and they were less than were deserved. This conviction assists the Christian to bear with resignation all the sorrows which God may send; and it also explains many otherwise mysterious dispensations.

9. This dispensation proclaims to the world the blessedness of a state of preparation for eternity.

In that vessel, were many of the people of God, trained to his worship and service. Though startled by the sudden summons, death found them not unwilling to travel, staff in hand and pilgrim shod, into the unseen world.

"Joy for the soldier when his field is fought,  
Joy for the peasant when his vintage task  
Is closed at eve."

And joy to the traveller who is near his home! There can be no doubt that faith brought hidden glories to view amidst the desolations of that trying period. "As their day, so was their strength." Methinks I

see her, that noble Christian woman, with habits of life arranged for heaven; sorrowing, indeed, for loved ones left behind, but smiling for a welcome from her Saviour gone before, tearful for time, but with eyes undimmed for eternity, with heart and lip in gentle union for solemn prayer, and her example, to the last declaring—"I know that my Redeemer liveth!" (Job 19 : 25.) Other followers of the Lamb were no doubt "strong in faith, giving glory to God." (Rom. 4 : 20.) Such an occasion is a sublime test of true religion. Whilst the hope of the hypocrite is as the giving up of the ghost, that of the believer is as the entrance into life. Blessed of God were they who were prepared to sing the new song! It was no time to commence the preparation; but any time is a good time to go that is God's time to call, having on the righteousness of Christ, and knowing in whom we have believed. Perhaps some of the exhibitions of religion that shone forth from the sinking Arctic, are even now the theme of angelic praise for grace so plenteously shed on sinners of a mortal race! Why not? Is it too much to expect that Christ was in a peculiar sense present with those whose wants were so peculiar? Aside from the agitations of the hour, natural to the infirmities of human nature, the friends and relatives of the departed may indulge the cheerful belief, that their brethren and sisters in Christ died with an assurance as real, if not as calm, as would have borne them up in their own dear homes. Though

their faces will never more be seen in the land of the living, it is a blessed hope that "the sea shall give up the dead that were in it" (Rev. 20:13), and that "them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." (1 Thess. 4:14.)

10. The horrors of a soul, shipwrecked on the abyss of eternity, are naturally suggested among the wise lessons of the recent catastrophe. No allusion is, of course, intended to any of the Arctic's company. The lesson attempted to be derived from their calamity is offered as a warning to the impenitent in our own congregation. The transition is natural from the shipwreck of the body to that of the soul. May God aid us on so awful a theme!

There are two incidents in the hardened sinner's destruction which God distinctly proclaims in his word, and which the late catastrophe tends to illustrate. First, it is *sudden* destruction. No event was more unlooked for than a watery grave four hours after the striking of those bells at noon. The destruction of the ship, and of the lives of those who went down in her, was emphatically sudden. So will it be with the final wreck of those who reject Christ from their hearts. "For when they shall say, 'Peace and safety,' then sudden destruction cometh upon them." (1 Thess. 5:3.) The suddenness of the doom has a connection with its certainty; which is the other idea involved in its issue. "Whoso, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall *suddenly* be

destroyed, and that *without remedy.*" (Prov. 29 : 1.) As the waves swallowed up hundreds in remediless ruin, so the finally impenitent shall meet a destiny from which there is no escape. These two awful ideas of a sudden destruction, and one without remedy, prepare us to weigh well the nature of the woe, threatened in Holy Writ.

The lost in eternity, like the ill-fated passengers on the wreck, are *deprived of all comfort in worldly things.* "He that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." (Matt. 13 : 12.) "Son, remember, thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things." (Luke 16 : 25.) When the gulf is passed, all comforts cease. Riches, rank, labour, learning, no more avail. What would not some of those passengers have given for the shelter of the meanest hut in the desert! The lost can purchase nothing back. "Thirty thousand pounds," in a dying hour, like thirty pieces of treacherous silver, would but perish with the soul. Even a drop of cold water is beyond reach, where the soul wants, but cannot have, for ceaseless ages.

*Separation from the loved companions of life* is another element of eternal misery. Friends bade adieu on the wreck never more to take counsel together in this life. There can be no social enjoyment among the lost; there is "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." In the land of the living, God grants the blessings of social intercourse and the endearments of home—blessings, which go far towards supplying

the impenitent with happiness. But in the other world, are no friends, no home, no intermediate enjoyments to interrupt the infliction of the tremendous penalty of law. The soul, tossing upon the wreck of its immortal hopes, sighs solitary and alone, in incommunicable agony.

The *despair* of that ill-fated company amidst the yawning waves, is a feeble symbol of the despair in the world of woe. No hope enters; all around is the horror of darkness. Shut up to the agonies of eternal conscience, the soul in vain looks for deliverance. Its doom is despair. Despair! Who can describe its terrors; who can endure its pangs? It heaps billows upon the spirit's wreck. It cries out to the worms, "Die not," and to the flames, "Be not quenched." It is a curse of the lost, which the cursed can never lose.

*Physical suffering* is conspicuous among the weary and the shipwrecked; but what sufferings here can shriek out the intense meaning of the sufferings of hell? In addition to the inward agony, there is outward physical infliction in some terrific form. The gnawing worm and the burning flame, are the words of Scripture indicating its severity. God follows sin in this world with external retribution. The bodily organization is used as the medium of punishment, in ways, that produce and promote the intensest agony. What more credible than that physical suffering in the world of the lost shall be continued, on a scale corresponding to the capabilities of the new, resurrection body?

*Death* was the consummation of destruction to the sufferers on the ocean; the judgment passed on the guilty, is *eternal death*. As the death of the body is its physical ruin, so the death of the soul is its ruin, spiritual and eternal. The latter implies a total alienation from God; the perversion of thought, feeling, conscience, will; a determined persistency in evil; a course of accumulating sin throughout everlasting ages! Oh, what endless woes must abide upon a soul, thus shut out from its chief end, and shut up to fulfil its own damnation!

Men and brethren, “the time is short.” (1 Cor. 7:29.) “The redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever.” (Psalm 47:13.) The commerce of nations equals not its worth. “What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Matt. 16:26.) The vessel, in which we are sailing to other shores, is laden with immortal freight. Perilous is the voyage. Driven on by the engine of a living heart, the ship is making progress through the waters; but is there careful superintendence of its destiny? Beware of fatal collision, in the mists of impenitence and unbelief. Beware of ruin, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. Father of mercies! Grant that we may all lay hold of salvation, through the blood of the Cross; and, escaping through grace the dangers by the way, may enter, under the banner of thy love, the haven of eternal rest!



## APPENDIX.

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THE following account of the terrible shipwreck of the *Aretic*, and of some of its incidents, is from the letter of CAPTAIN LUCE, who was taken off one of the fragments of the wreck, by the *Cambria*.

### LETTER FROM CAPTAIN LUCE, TO E. K. COLLINS, ESQ.

QUEBEC, October 14th.

DEAR SIR:—

It becomes my painful duty, to inform you of the total loss of the steamship *Aretic*, under my command, with your wife, son, and daughter. The *Aretic* sailed from Liverpool on Wednesday, September 20, at 11 o'clock, A.M., having on board two hundred and thirty-three passengers, and about one hundred and fifty in the crew.

Nothing worthy of special note occurred during the passage, until Wednesday, the 27th, when at noon, we were on the banks of Newfoundland, in latitude forty-five degrees north, and longitude fifty-two degrees west. We were steering west by the compass. The weather had been foggy during the day, and generally a distance of from half to three quarters of a mile could be seen, but at intervals of a few minutes a very dense fog, would be followed by its being sufficiently clear to see one or two miles.

At noon, I left the deck for the purpose of working out the position of the ship. In about fifteen minutes, I heard the cry of "Hard starboard!" from the officers on deck. I rushed on deck, and had just got out, when I felt a crash forward, and at the same moment saw a steamer under the starboard bow, and the next moment she struck against our guards, and passed astern of us.

The bows of the strange vessel, seemed to be literally cut or crushed off for full ten feet, and seeing that she must probably sink in ten minutes, and taking a glance at our own ship, and believing that we were comparatively uninjured, my first impulse was to endeavour to save the lives of those on board the sinking vessel. The boats were cleared, and the first officer and six men left with one boat, when it was found that our own ship was leaking fearfully.

The engineers set to work, being instructed to put on the steam pumps,

and four deck pumps were worked by the passengers and crew. The ship was headed for land, which I judged to be about fifty miles distant. I was compelled to leave my boat with the first officer and crew, to take care of themselves.

Several ineffectual attempts were made to stop the leak, by getting sails over the bows; and finding the leak gained on us very fast, notwithstanding all our very powerful efforts to keep her free, I resolved to get the boats ready, and have as many ladies and children placed in them as possible; but no sooner had an attempt been made to do this, than the firemen and others rushed into the boats, in spite of all opposition. Seeing this state of things, I ordered the boats astern, to be kept in readiness until order could be restored—when, to my dismay, I saw them cut the rope in the bow, and soon disappear astern in the fog. Another boat was broken down by persons rushing on at the davits, and many were precipitated into the sea and drowned. This occurred while I had been engaged in getting the starboard guard boat ready, and placed the second officer in charge, when the same fearful scene as with the first boat, was being enacted—men leaping from the top of the rail, a distance of twenty feet, pushing and maiming those who were in the boat. I then gave orders to the second officer to let go, and row after the ship, keeping under, and near the stern, to be ready to take on board the women and children, as soon as the fires were out, and the engine stopped. My attention was then drawn to the other quarter boat; which I found broken down, but hanging by one tackle. A rush was made for her also, and some fifteen got in and cut the tackle, and were soon out of sight.

Not a seaman was left on board, or a carpenter, and we were without tools to assist us in building a raft, as our only hope, and the only officer left was Dorian, the third mate, who aided us with his assistance. Many of the passengers, who deserve great praise for their coolness and energy, did all in their power up to the very latest moment before the ship sunk. The chief engineer, with part of his assistants, had taken one of the small deck boats, and before the ship went down pulled away with about thirteen persons. We had succeeded in getting our fore and mainyards, and two top-gallant yards overboard, and such other small spars and materials that we could collect, when I was convinced that the ship must go down in a very short time, and not a moment was to be lost in getting spars lashed together to form the raft, to do which, it became necessary to get the life-boat, the only remaining boat, into the water.

This being accomplished, I saw Mr. Dorian, the chief officer of the boat taking care to keep the oars on board, to prevent those in the boat from leaving the ship, hoping still to get the women and children into the boat at last. They had made considerable progress in collecting spars, when an alarm was given that the ship was sinking, and the boat shoved off without oars or anything to help themselves with; and when the ship sunk, the boat had got clear, probably an eighth of a mile to the leeward. In an instant,



at about a quarter to 5 p. m., the ship went down, carrying every soul on board with her. I soon found myself on the surface after a brief struggle, with my own helpless child in my arms, when I again found myself impelled downward to a great depth, and before I reached the surface the second time, I had nearly perished, and lost the hold of my child, as I struggled upwards. When I got upon the surface of the water, the most awful and heart-rending scene presented itself to my view. Over two hundred men, women, and children, struggling together amidst pieces of the wreck, calling on each other for help, and imploring God to assist them. Such an appalling scene may God preserve me from ever witnessing again.

I was in the act of trying to save my child, when a portion of the paddle-box came washing up edgeways, just grazing my head, and falling with its whole weight upon the head of my darling child. In another moment, I beheld him lifeless in the water. I succeeded in getting upon the top of the paddle-box, in company with eleven others. One, however, soon after left for another piece, finding it could not support so many. The others remained until they were one by one relieved by death. We stood in water, at a temperature of forty-five degrees, up to our knees, and frequently the sea broke directly over us. We soon separated from our friends on other parts of the wreck, and passed the night, each one of us expecting every hour to be our last. The wished for morning came, surrounded with a dense fog, and not a living soul could be seen but our own party, seven men being left.

[Here follows an account of the sufferings of Captain Luce and his companions, until they were taken off the paddle-box, on the following day, at 3 p. m., by the *Cambria*.]

As near as we could learn, the *Vesta* was steering east-southeast, and was crossing our course two points, with all sail set; the wind was west-by-south at the time.

Her anchor, which was about seven by four inches square, was drawn through the bows of the *Aretic*, about eighteen inches above the water-line, and an immense hole had been made at the same instant by the fluke of the anchor, about two feet below the water-line, raking the fore and aft plank, and finally breaking its chain, leaving the stock remaining in and through the side of the *Aretic*, or, it is not unlikely that, as so much of her bow had been crushed in, some of the heavy longitudinal pieces of iron running through the side of the ship, may have been driven through the side, causing the loss of our ship, and, I fear, of hundreds of most valuable lives.

I am, respectfully, your very obedient servant,

JAMES C. LUCE.

The *Vesta*, notwithstanding her shattered condition, reached St. John's in safety.

MAHLON DAY, extensively known as a publisher, was seen floating on a plank after the *Arctic* went down, and was about getting on the paddle-box with Captain Luce and others. On discovering, however, that his continuing there would endanger the safety of others, he nobly determined to abide his solitary fate.

Mahlon Day, his wife and daughter, who were all lost in the sea, were known and much loved in Burlington. Mrs. Day, although born in England, was brought up in our community; and Mr. Day was an intimate friend of the late Joseph John Gurney, whom we all venerate, and a man of kindred spirit and aim.

A number of other passengers had friends in our community. It is to be hoped that all may have consolation from the text, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." (Rev. 14: 13.)



## PSALM XC.

A PRAYER OF MOSES, THE MAN OF GOD.

1. LORD, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.
2. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.
3. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.
4. For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.
5. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are *as* a sleep; in the morning *they are* like grass *which* groweth up.
6. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
7. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.
8. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance.
9. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale *that is told*.
10. The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
11. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, *so is* thy wrath.
12. So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.
13. Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
14. O satisfy us early with thy mercy: that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
15. Make us glad according to the days *wherein* thou hast afflicted us, and the years *wherein* we have seen evil.
16. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.
17. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.